Emily Brontë’s Goldfish

(Dedicated to Timothy Taylor’s Landlord bitter)

For a brief few months of her childhood, Emily Brontë had a pet goldfish called Heathcliff. Heathcliff was given to swim moodily round his goldfish bowl, angrily parting the water and glaring at all outside the confines of his thick glass prison. Heathcliff was a tortured soul, consumed by anger, rage and jealousy - and a cat called Isabella. His sudden end ended Emily’s role as a custodian of the animal world, but she never forgot...

If you visit the village of Haworth in Yorkshire, England, and walk its steep, narrow, cobbled streets, and follow the signs for the Brontë Parsonage Museum, you will find a large, well-maintained house and, hidden away in a dark corner of the sitting room, a green-tinged goldfish bowl and half-empty tub of ant eggs with a faint childish scrawl on its side: **HEETHCLIF**. To me, this is one of the more sad and interesting artefacts held by the museum: interesting because it shows an example of art imitating life; sad because of a bitter, entrapped existence cut short by a hungry feline.

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